United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Yasushi Akashi arrives in Zagreb to take up position as Special Representative of Secretary-General for former Yugoslavia and head of UNPROFOR, replacing Thorvald Stoltenberg, who continues as United Nations representative and Co-Chairman of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia.

+ WFP will supply additional 17,000 metric tons of emergency food to vulnerable people throughout Somalia as first part of 53,000 tonnes of high value commodities needed for 1994; while only 15 percent of WFP projects there now emergency-related, Somalia is still recovering from severe famine.

+ UNICEF appeals for $2 million to help feed and educate some 30,000 abandoned children in Malange, Angola; 50 per cent of them reported to be malnourished, many of them orphaned by long war between Government and UNITA.

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Yasushi Akashi arrived in Zagreb today to assume his position as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the former Yugoslavia. As such, he is taking over as head of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) from Thorvald Stoltenberg, the United Nations representative and Co-Chairman, with Lord Owen, of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Mr. Stoltenberg will now focus on his role as Co-Chairman. Mr. Akashi's previous position was as head of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the largest field operation ever launched by the Organization.

Addressing the press at Zagreb airport, he said he had been told that the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina were very close to accepting a peace package. "With the exception of the question of access to the sea, they are indeed very close. But always it is the last step which is difficult, which requires an act of courage on the part of the leadership," he

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said. "But if the international community sees positive, serious efforts on the part of the parties in ex-Yugoslavia, I think they will agree to keep their troops here."

A United Nations spokesman said today that the next formal round of talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina are scheduled to take place on 18 January in Geneva. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Croatia will be meeting in Vienna tomorrow to discuss matters related to the draft peace agreement presented at the previous round of negotiations.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will supply an additional 16,900 metric tons of emergency food to vulnerable people throughout Somalia as the first part of the 53,289 tonnes of high value commodities that will be needed this year. Of all WFP projects in Somalia, only 15 percent are now emergency related but, as WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini pointed out, although significant progress had been made over the last year in alleviating hunger, Somalia was still recovering from the widespread famine. "The WFP's priority for 1994 is to initiate activities which strengthen food security, from the national level right down to households," she said.

The WFP requires $50 million worth of various food commodities to carry out its 300 food programmes in Somalia in 1994. Improved security and increased agricultural input, combined with good rains, resulted in a 1993 crop season of "average" to "satisfactory" harvests. However, there are various pockets of continuing hunger in the countryside and in some urban areas. Village and family buffer stocks have not yet regained their pre-war levels.

Ms. Bertini said, "The people of Somalia urgently need employment to get back on their feet. For this reason, 50 per cent of WFP's programmes in 1994 are food-for-work schemes which we expect will generate around 64,000 jobs, indirectly benefiting 320,000 people."

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today appealed for $2 million to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance to some 30,000 abandoned children in Malange, Angola. The children are the latest victims of ongoing civil strife in that country. Malange, one of the hardest hit cities, was until recently sealed off because of months of bitter fighting between forces of the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Commenting on the situation, the representative of UNICEF for Angola, Joseph Christmas, said that his assessment mission to Malange on 14 December was one of his most painful experiences in Angola. "Unless these children are provided with sustained emergency assistance and the problem of their future

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According to a United Nations spokesman, Mr. Dumbutshena arrived in Mogadishu yesterday and has already started to carry out his assignment. Pending the re-establishment of the country's judicial system, UNOSOM has held people believed to have been involved in attacks against its personnel or in other criminal actions, while it awaited the appointment of the Independent Jurist.

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General yesterday expressed deep distress at renewed violence in Kabul since 1 January, which has caused heavy loss of life; appealed to all involved to cease hostilities immediately and resolve problems peacefully.

+ Prime Minister of Bosnia and Foreign Minister of Croatia meet in Vienna for bilateral talks on peace efforts and issues of mutual concern; Co-Chairmen of peace conference, Stoltenberg and Owen, expected to pay informal visit, to hear from both sides.

+ Jacques Diouf (Senegal) takes over as Director-General of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, succeeding Edouard Saouma (Lebanon) who headed Agency for last 18 years.

+ Azerbaijan calls for international condemnation of what it decribes as recent intensification of aggression against it by Armenia; in letter to Security Council, Chargé d'affaires says missile and artillery bombardment on 29 December left six dead and 18 wounded.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday expressed deep distress at the renewed outbreak of violence in the Afghan capital of Kabul on 1 January. The fighting has continued since then with heavy loss of life. He urgently appealed to all groups engaged in the violence to cease hostilities immediately and resolve their problems peacefully.

He said the violence further delayed the day when Afghans could embark on the reconstruction of their shattered country, with the help of the international community. The United Nations agencies, he added, were coordinating efforts to respond to this new humanitarian tragedy.

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The Prime Minister of Bosnia, Haris Silajic, and the Foreign Minister of Croatia, Mate Granic, met today in Vienna for bilateral talks on the on-going

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efforts to end the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and also to address specific mutual concerns.

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord David Owen, did not preside over the talks, as they will over the next round of formal negotiations due to begin in Geneva on 18 January. But according to a United Nations spokesman, they were expected to visit Vienna late today to hear from the two sides.

The agenda in Vienna today included the proposal on partitioning Bosnia and Herzegovina along ethnic lines put forward in the most recent round of Geneva talks, and also the demand of the Bosnian Muslims for a land corridor to the Adriatic Sea. They were also expected to discuss the situation in Central Bosnia where Bosnian Government forces have surrounded approximately 65,000 Bosnian Croats.

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Jacques Diouf (Senegal) today became Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) during a formal handing-over ceremony, the first in FAO's history. He succeeded Edouard Saouma (Lebanon) who had served FAO for more than 30 years, and headed it for the last 18. Mr. Saouma did not seek a fourth six-year term.

In his inaugural speech, Mr. Diouf thanked the retiring Director-General for his long and distinguished service to FAO and the international community. He said that FAO today had the greatest concentration of high-level expertise on food and agricultural issues and that it should build on this wealth of human resources. In the future, the Agency must continue to emphasize increased productivity, but also the preservation of the natural assets future generations would need for their survival.

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Azerbaijan has called on the world community to condemn what it describes as a recent intensification of aggression against it by Armenia. In a letter dated 30 December to the President of the Security Council, issued today, the Chargé d'affaires of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, Yashar T. Aliyev, said that a massive missile and artillery bombardment had been conducted on 29 December against settlements in the Kazakh and Akstafa districts in northwest Azerbaijan, a considerable distance from the disputed Nagorny Karabakh region.

He said that six people had died in the all-day attack and 18 had been wounded. "The bombardment of Azerbaijani civilian facilities and settlements located far from the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic once again confirms the open aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijan in an attempt to annex further Azerbaijani territory," he wrote. He called for Armenia to be held accountable for its acts against a sovereign State.

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The Security Council has repeatedly condemned violations of the cease-fire established last year between the Azerbaijani and Armenian forces and expressed its support for the efforts of the Russian Federation and the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to bring about a permanent peace between the two sides.
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